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## Surgeon General's Corner: Navy Medicine's Highlights Global Health Engagement

Filed under: [HEATH](#) [HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF](#) [LEADERSHIP](#) (NO COMMENTS)

By Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, U.S. Navy Surgeon General



Our motto in Navy Medicine is “world-class care, anytime, anywhere.” The task we have before us to provide care, whether it is to a forward-deployed Sailor serving at sea, to someone in need during a medical civic assistance project, or developing a vaccine in one of our overseas research labs, is never done alone. Navy Medicine works with [Combatant Commanders](#), coalition forces, [ministries of health](#), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide to ensure we meet our mission on any platform, in any environment.

This month we highlight Navy Medicine's support to [global health engagement](#). We are a maritime nation and a maritime service. When we look at Navy Medicine's role of providing not only health care but health to our service members, their families, and those entrusted to Navy Medicine, we are acting on a global scale. Over 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water, more than 80 percent of the Earth's population lives near a coastline, and more than 90 percent of the world's commerce travels by sea. The naval mission of maintaining the safety and security of our sea lanes—being 100 percent “on watch”—and Navy Medicine's role in keeping our Sailors and Marines fit and ready, to do just that, has never been more important. We can't do this without our worldwide partners.

Navy Medicine's mission is one with a truly global footprint. We are forward deployed with operating forces overseas and our research units provide a global health benefit around the world. Navy Medicine personnel serve as ambassadors worldwide and are the heart and soul of the U.S. Navy as a “Global Force for Good.” Building partnerships around the world is imperative to our ability to meet our mission and be a responsive and effective organization. I believe this to be so important that I recently stood up an office dedicated to Global Health Engagement. That office will align and synchronize the global health engagements that promote lasting partnerships worldwide.

Global health engagement includes our humanitarian assistance/disaster response [(HA/DR)] missions. These HA/DR missions directly support the Navy's Maritime Strategy and they continue to expand because they have proven to be highly successful in building global relationships. With past support to critical missions like [Operation Unified Response](#) in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake, Navy Medicine serves the international leader in HA/DR response.

### Navy Medicine Video

Navy Medicine is a global healthcare network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high quality health care to more than one million eligible beneficiaries. Navy Medicine personnel deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ship, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.

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VINH, VIETNAM (July 13, 2012) Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Maria Aluma-Lopez gives instruction project (MEDCAP) at Nguyen Thi Minh Khai. Numerous civil action projects will be conducted during the mission in Vietnam. Pacific Partnership is the largest annual humanitarian and civic action (HCA) mission, with medical professionals from 10 other nations and 14 international and local non-government organizations. The mission includes subject matter expert exchanges. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Maria Aluma-Lopez)

More recently, Navy Medicine personnel provided essential support to [Operation Tomodachi](#) after the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011. As the foremost experts in radiation health issues, our Navy Medicine Radiation Health Officers and Radiation Health Technicians answered the international call for assistance to Japan and provided paramount support following the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster. They provided onsite monitoring of radioactive contamination, counseling to those affected, played a key role in the development of a health registry for those affected in the Area of Responsibility (AOR) during the disaster and provided advice to the Combatant Commander and Navy and Marine Corps flag and general officers in the Pacific AOR. Their presence and expertise provided relief and solace to an extremely concerned population.

The Navy hospital ships also conduct planned deployment humanitarian assistance missions where they work with local ministries of health to bring care to the people of foreign nations. [USNS Comfort's](#) mission in Central and South America and the Caribbean for [Continuing Promise](#) 2011, as well as [USNS Mercy's 2012 Pacific Partnership](#) mission to Southeast Asia, provide further evidence of our continued commitment to the global efforts to foster security and stability worldwide. Our hospital ships are executing our Maritime Strategy by building the trust and cooperation we need to strengthen our regional alliances and empower partners around the world. With each successful deployment, we increase our interoperability with host and partner nations, NGOs and the interagency.

As a Global Force for Good, Navy Medicine also conducts international [military education and training](#) and bilateral exchanges as a means to build relationships by promoting common interests, while working with local governmental organizations. We also have Navy Medicine personnel engaged in training throughout the world in military-to-military education. Such training helps to bridge understanding between militaries. In addition, building the health capacities of the U.S. and its multilateral partners also improves bio-surveillance and response and protects populations at home and abroad.

As we employ a whole of government approach to global health engagement (military, interagency and NGOs) integrating to reach a common goal, we also harness the power of jointness. As we move forward in this interconnected world, this goal will be more important than ever.

I am extremely proud of the work that all of you continue to do on a daily basis and am proud to be your Surgeon General.

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